

11 December 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
SUBJECT : OXCART Material for PFIAB Briefing

1. This memorandum is for information only.

2. Your memorandum for Chairman, The President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board (PFIAB), (copy attached) dated 1 December 1967, indicated that the OXCART project can be maintained operationally for approximately [] dollars per year. The major items making up this figure are as follows:

NRO FUNDS

Aircraft maintenance and overhaul

Engine maintenance and overhaul

Maintenance, modifications, and overhaul of airborne systems (including cameras, navigation and countermeasure equipment, etc.)

Operation and maintenance of []

Pilot salaries and equipment support

U. S. AIR FORCE SUPPORT VIA NRO

Fuel

[]
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CIA-FUNDED SUPPORT

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Salaries, travel, ground communications, equipment and cable rentals, etc.

3. One major Lockheed contract provides all of the spare parts (except those associated with the engine and sensors), the maintenance crews that perform all maintenance from minor adjustments to total overhaul of the aircraft and a number of miscellaneous items such as flight test support. At the moment the

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"skunk works" facilities where major overhauls are carried out. Some additional information might be useful in discussing this support. Approximately 20 members are assigned to a maintenance crew required to keep one aircraft serviced and operational. These rank among the best aircraft mechanics in the world and the success in keeping the aircraft flying with a high degree of reliability is attributable in large measure to their skill and dedication.

4. Three Pratt Whitney contracts provide for everything from daily servicing of the engines to complete engine overhaul at the Pratt Whitney factory in Fla. We have gradually increased the life of the engines between major overhauls so we are now able to get 90 flight hours before engine tear down is required. This is one place where our cost figures have dropped significantly over the past year. Even though there are only 7 aircraft now flying we have a total of 42 engines in the inventory. Each aircraft, of course, uses 2 engines and we require considerable reserve to allow overhaul and to assure a reasonable stock against unexpected failure.

5. Maintenance work on the remainder of the aircraft systems again involves highly skilled technicians,

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these from a total of 22 companies such as: Honeywell, Minneapolis (autopilot); [redacted] (inertial navigation system); Perkin-Elmer (cameras); [redacted]

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[redacted] The equipment involved is some of the most advanced in the world and requires great care to assure that it operates correctly and is not inadvertently damaged during operation. For example, with the cost and risks involved we would not dare fly a camera system more than once without checking it over in great detail; a camera failure means a mission failure. This principle applies to any other system in which a malfunction could result in mission failure.

6. I would like to point out that the maximum pilot salary is [redacted] and the remainder of the pilot cost is associated with the highly specialized equipment necessary for their survival. Their suits, for example, are essentially the same as those used by the US astronauts in the space program and although I do not know how much money NASA puts out in this arena I would say that our costs are only a fraction of the equatable costs being spent for astronauts. (Cost of one pilot suit - [redacted])

7. I would recommend that in any discussion with the Board you particularly point to the fact that this [redacted] dollar figure is now only slightly more than half of the original budget estimate of [redacted] million dollars. As I told you in our earlier conversation, there is no one explanation for this radical reduction. We have, of course, reduced our inventory to six operational aircraft and a trainer, but I think a significant chunk is accounted for by management in the Office of Special Activities. The aircraft is no longer considered a research and development vehicle but is a proven operational aircraft on which we have gained a great deal of experience. Thus we are able to spend our money more predictably than was the case one or two years ago. We have really tightened our belts and I

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am convinced there is no fat in the [REDACTED]

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8. On the present schedule we would return the three aircraft from Kadena to [REDACTED] in early February, maintain an operational capability through 31 March, and store all aircraft during the month of April.

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Deputy Director
for
Science and Technology

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